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## Improvement of Teachers' Qualification at Kazan Federal University

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**Abstract:** Today in the Republic of Tatarstan everybody understands the necessity of better training and professional re-training of teachers, the importance of improvement of higher qualification courses. Coordination Council on pedagogical education under leadership of the Minister of education and science of the Republic of Tatarstan and the rector of Kazan (federal) university was founded in Kazan. The council has joined together the forces of the scientists and teachers of KFU and the representatives of regional Ministry of education and science, other institutes, the directors of secondary vocational education facilities and regular schools, teachers implementing innovations. Finding common positions, joint discussion of the most serious problems and use of joint efforts for their solution create conditions for improvement of training, higher qualification programs and professional re-training of teachers.

**Key words:** Continuous education • Higher education • Improvement of qualification • Professional activity  
• Teacher • School reform

### INTRODUCTION

Modern Russian society faces difficult task of reformation of school education [1, 2]. But active debates about different aspects of school reform obscure another vital issue-the problem of improvement of teachers' qualification [3-5].

Conditions of professional activity of teachers have changed radically for the last decades but that is not enough - they are permanently changing now and teachers must react to these changes adequately and in due time [6]. The knowledge as a whole becomes different, the process of its renewal is accelerating, the ways of its study and mastering are changing, the problem of absolute knowledge becomes more and more abstract.

In recent decades the requirements to a teacher have changed greatly. A teacher of today has ceased to be just a "re-transmitter" of information which with development of information technologies is not inaccessible any more, he has become a tutor, professional whose aim is to teach a learner to find and select information independently, on his own and transform it into knowledge. A teacher within very short period of time should master a set of quite new competences; change his thinking, his vision of educational process. He must turn from a "doer" into the designer, co-author of discipline programs; be able to

bring success to their students; be able to use in his work the newest IT-solutions; effectively solve many other tasks, which are hard to predict [7].

The task of such "renewal" of teachers must be laid, first of all, upon the system of teachers' qualification improvement and this system, in its turn, needs serious organizational, content and material renewal. It is very interesting that developed countries which have leading systems of school education in the world focus on 3 factors, 2 of them are directly related to activity of a teacher: 1) it is necessary that only people who have inclination for teaching could enter the profession; 2) it is necessary to provide them with such training which will increase efficiency of teachers' work. The conclusion of M. Barber and M. Murshed is as follows: "...highly efficient school systems being very different from each other by structure and content of teaching were focused on improvement of teachers' work quality because it is the factor which influence directly education level of learners" [8].

We must admit that organizational structure of teachers' higher qualification courses which formed in Soviet times does not work any more. The content of higher qualification course and professional re-training of teachers in most cases is out-of-date, mainly due to the fact that many structures are not able to develop new

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programs and technologies and implement them into teaching environment. Education programs are not aimed for bringing specific results, they are formalized and intended for obtaining some document: it results in that the attendees are interested in minimizing financial expenses and efforts associated with improvement of qualification. Non-perfect monitoring systems which must check competence of teachers, among other things, facilitate this formalization [9]. Indeed, school director points out to the teacher that he has not attended higher qualification courses for a long time, while he must emphasize his limited professional competences in some sphere [10]. In some time a teacher shows his certificate which confirms his attendance to the courses and that is quite enough - increase in efficiency of his work is not checked. Besides that, short periods of time when a teacher can leave school to attend higher qualification courses does not comply with modern requirements to dynamics of renewal of professional competences. We have paradox situation when nobody is responsible for improvement of teachers' qualification in long term.

These are main reasons of non-achievement of the goal of school reforms - growth of educational process quality and the level of learners' training.

World practice testifies: an incompetent, non-professional teacher can train only a "poor" student. In the context of mentioned problem we can add that a "poor" education facility can not provide improvement of teachers' qualification on proper level. The effect of this is as follows: 5 years will be lost (Russian standards of qualification improvement) and hundreds learners (only per one teacher) will not get high-quality education. Improvement of teachers' qualification must become an element of systematic and well-thought state policy in educational sphere. On regional level this policy must provide every constituent entity or a group of constituent entities of Russian Federation with special centers responsible for development and implementation of long-term strategy of qualification improvement and professional re-training of teachers with due regard to general characteristics of this process and the particularities of specific region.

Criteria for selection of such "centers of responsibility" are quite simple and transparent:

- Availability of continuous pedagogical education system;
- Training of teachers in all disciplines taught in regular schools;

- High organizational and staff, content and technical support of teachers' qualification improvement process.

These requirements can be met only at strong universities and this is the key point of modernization of the teachers' qualification improvement system, which is oriented to the leaders in education, performing the function of "growth points" in this sphere.

KFU (Kazan (Volga region) federal university is absolute leader in the whole Volga region and in the Republic of Tatarstan.

Traditions of teacher training in Kazan Imperial university and its historical successor, KFU, have been formed for 200 years, since foundation of pedagogical institute organized within its walls in 1812 which become the first educational facility of this kind in Volga region. At present time Kazan federal university provides pedagogical education on all key levels: vocational education programs, pedagogical Bachelor's studies, Master's studies, higher qualification and professional re-training of teachers, additional professional education, post-graduate education. Besides that formation of inter-regional center of higher qualification within the structure of KFU allowed to create an efficient system of continuous pedagogical education and support of the teachers during all their activity. Therefore, the university is forming a system of long-term responsibility for professional growth of teachers, it has created its own system of teachers' appraisal implementing flexible forms of improvement of their qualification and re-training with due regard to the needs of educational facilities. This allows to establish effective relationship between pedagogical science and practice, implement well-timed adjustments into the process of primary training of teachers. This is the main advantage of KFU in comparison with other facilities, which provide higher qualification courses and professional re-training of teachers.

Improvement of qualification and professional re-training of teachers must be commitment of those universities which provide basic teachers' training and are in the same time big scientific centers able to form new content of education. Kazan university is one of those universities which provide basic teachers' training in all disciplines, taught in regular schools. Availability of wide range of specialties and specializations in conditions of big university allows that the principles of systematic approach, scientific rigour and continuity can be implemented in full and this, in turn, corresponds to

modern requirements and maximally adjusts the activity to conditions and needs of the region and the country. We have a situation when, for the first time in Russia, specific profile institutes joined together within single organizational structure of KFU, will perform function of centers of qualification improvement in appropriate discipline. It is also important that while actively participating in this process institutes and faculties often "receive" their former students back - it will enable them to see their own gaps in professional training of future teachers and make appropriate adjustments in time.

Inclusion of pedagogical education institutes into the structure of classical university created unique conditions for formation of new organizational structure of continuous pedagogical education. As a result KFU has concentrated the most powerful in Volga Region scientific and educational potential in the sphere of pedagogics and psychology. Availability of such solid scientific-pedagogical resource will enable not only to solve tasks of any level but make serious breakthrough in scientific research, especially in the sphere applied disciplines which are most demanded in educational practice. This will allow to establish the system to select professors and teachers for work on improvement of teachers' qualification, provide their regular internal appraisal and training. With this purpose time unique module program of higher qualification is being realized now where famous Russian and foreign scientists and practisers have been invented. It is planned within 3 years to certify all professors and teachers of pedagogical departments and to provide their probation with the aid of authorized foreign companies. This shows once again responsible attitude to improvement of teachers' qualification.

Key advantage of federal university is opportunity to attract its own leading scientists of profile institutes (physics, chemistry, history etc.) for improvement of teachers' qualification, to get teachers familiar with brand new inventions in some discipline, which is especially important for natural sciences taught in school. Every profile KFU's institute is a key link in work with teachers in corresponding discipline which allows to reach a higher level of a teacher's competence in this discipline. It is necessary to emphasize that apart from other educational, scientific or any other facilities a federal university while using its unique staff resources is able to provide high quality of the whole process of qualification improvement, to offer within every specialty a wide range of various courses. It is also important that the university has financial opportunities to pay higher wages for most qualified personnel.

During only 1 year work of KFU in the sphere of teachers' qualification improvement there were significant changes in the content renewal of this process. The teachers start to get involved into network interaction under the aegis of KFU including: formation of virtual and traditional educational communities, conferences of different level, Master's and Bachelor's studies, invitation of leading national and foreign scientists, internship at chairs, training at short-term seminars.

One of the principles of efficient educational systems says that every teacher must master advanced methods and it can be achieved only through watching these methods in action in real situation. Federal university has its own 2 specialized regular schools (they are its own structural divisions): IT-lyceum and the lyceum named after N. Lobachevsky, developed network of basic schools where potential of KFU is used.

One of the key tools of work with teachers is increase in diversity of forms, means and methods of educational interaction. Side by side with traditional lectures and seminars individual work is used (first of all, in remote, e-forms), studies in small groups, tuition etc). The university has its own television company: it provides opportunities for broadcasting of best video-classes on different disciplines; in preparation of such broadcastings teachers take active part which is also a factor of their professional growth. Emphasis is also made on use of home and foreign electronic libraries and resources.

Technical conditions of KFU are much superior to pedagogical institutions and facilities participating in the process of teachers' qualification improvement. Almost all KFU institutes have most modern scientific and learning laboratories, including those which simulate education process in school. For example, Physics Institute has learning and laboratory equipment able to provide improvement of physics teachers' qualification to such an extent that it will correspond to teaching of future scientific and technical elite. The same can be said about all institutes and faculties of KFU without exception. It is worth adding that higher qualification courses' participators will live and study in modern and comfortable buildings of Universiade village - one of the best among Russian students' campuses. During winter and summer holidays Universiade village can receive more than 6 000 teachers which is important not only in terms of resources concentration and efficient control but will allow to avoid failure of educational process in school during school year when teachers leave for higher qualification courses.

The importance of improvement of better qualification process is understood on regional level. Coordination Council on pedagogical education under leadership of the Minister of education and science of the Republic of Tatarstan and the rector of KFU was founded in Kazan.

### **CONCLUSION**

We need new organizational approaches to professional growth of teachers including delegation of these functions to the leading universities of the country which have all necessary educational, scientific, technical and other resources. KFU is absolute leader of Volga Federal District in education and science and apart from many other universities KFU corresponds to the modern requirements and is ready to take responsibility for qualification improvement and professional re-training of teachers in long term. This is its mission but in the same time the vital need of the whole country because improvement of quality of teachers' work is obligatory condition for high level school education, in its turn, directly influencing development of higher education in Russia.

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